THE

OPERA RUMPUS;

OR,

THE LADIES IN THE WRONG BOX!

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]

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OR,

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A SERIO-COMIC-OPERATIC BURLESQUE POEM!

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY THE ABLEST COMMENTATORS.

Tempus erit—magno cum optaverit emptum
Intactum—et cum ſpolia iſta diemque
Oderit.

VIRG. ÆNEID.

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M DCC LXXXIII.

DEDICATION,

FROM THE AUTHOR TO HIMSELF!

DEAR SIR,

THE following maiden offspring of my muſe, I moſt reſpectfully preſume to dedicate to you. Various reaſons have induced me to give *you* the preference. Intimately connected with you by every ſacred tye, I am much better acquainted with the many excellencies you poſſeſs, than the common run of the world. Domeſtic virtues *retire* from the keen eye of pervading cenſure; and the moſt brilliant talents are *dimmed* by the glare of criticiſm. Let me offer a ſecond reaſon: moſt authors ſelect ſome *great* man to feed with the incenſe of their adulation: they expect a return; and often give their patrons credit for virtues

they are fully convinced exiſt no where but in the fertility of poetic imagination. Now, Sir, with reſpect to *you*, the caſe is different; I implicitly believe every ſuggeſtion in your favour, and really am,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt obliged,

Moſt devoted,

Moſt grateful,

Moſt reſpectful,

And moſt dutiful ſervant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following burleſque Poem took its riſe from a diſpute concerning a box in the Opera-houſe.—Hoſtilities raged for ſome time; but at length a peace has reſtored *that harmony*, which ever ought to reign in a theatre ſacred to muſic!——Operatic events are of ſuch conſequence, that every particular or prominent one ſhould be recorded by the muſes. As the Opera and the nation at large are equally convulſed by parties; the ſimilitude is appoſite. To ſay the truth, we all ſeem to be in the *wrong* box! A *leader* of the *national* band has been much wanted. The political inſtruments want *tuning*; every man wants a place, and all the world wants money! The author wants this poem to be approved of; the publiſher wants it to ſell well, and every body wants to know *who* wrote it! Wretched nation! Is there no method of ſupplying ſuch innumerable wants? Will the lately diſcovered public

defaulters

defaulters refund? Would not a doſe of *Scotch* pills amply purge Trans-Atlantic peculators? Unleſs the nabobs *gild* them too thick! *Aurum potabilè* is a pleaſant medicine; and ſeems the grand panaçea of the preſent age. However, the author has found a corner in opera politics to congratulate the peace-makers; and means to celebrate our *next* wonderful coalition as ſoon as one can be formed!—Opera for ever!—If the miniſter is to be badgered; it is ſettled at the opera: if a change of adminiſtration is agitated; inſtead of the *Cock-pit*, the *opera pit* terminates the negociation! As Mr. Bayes ludicrouſly obſerves,

" And then to *ſerious* bus'neſs let's advance.——
" I do agree:—but firſt, let's have a *dance*."

Who will blame me for celebrating *operatic* events in Heliconian cadence, after quoting ſuch reſpectable precedents—I ſay, *Vive la Bagatelle!*

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'TWAS night;—when rival belles and beaux
With mareſchal and toniſh clothes,
To Op'ra charms repair'd;
Harmonious ſounds from Allegranti,
*Morigi on his roſinantè
Danc'd, grunted, ſquall'd, and ſtar'd!—

* *Morigi on his Roſinantè*]—A figurative way of expreſſing that *buffoonery* is his hobby-horſe.

* Sweet

* Sweet Billy Bloſſom in his vis-a-
Vis purchas'd by † his father Eſau;
With powder'd footmen dangling:
Uplifted canes and burning flambeaux,
Bags, bouquets, perfumes for a nice noſe,
‡ And ſalts in caſe of wrangling!

Dear Lady Flutter and Sir Harry
Yawning: Alas! why did I marry?
In ſep'rate coaches ventur'd:
Next, Lady Turtle from the city,
Her daughter Ann (egad ſhe's pretty)
With flowing ſattins enter'd.

* Neuters

* *Sweet Billy Bloſſom in his vis-a-*]—A grand and matchleſs poetical licenſe: to vary the meaſure, and furniſh a rhime to *Eſau!*

† *His father Eſau*]—The father's *Chriſtian* name is mentioned to ſhew he is a *Jew!*—Do not ſtart at the ſeeming contradiction—Why may not Jews and Chriſtians coaleſce?—This is the *Annus Mirabilis* of extraordinary coalitions!—Though *ſome* commentators are of opinion that the name of *Eſau* is given as a proof of the extreme good *muſical* taſte of the *modern* Levites!

‡ *And ſalts in caſe of wrangling*]—*Fainting* is all the ton now.

* Neuters, non-entities, and noodles;
Brookes', *Weltje's*, *Betty's*, *White's*, and *Boodles'*
† Afforded various ſpeci-
-mens of our ‡ thrice-renown'd lawgivers,
Such good, ſuch virtuous, holy livers,
So dapper, ſmart, and dreſſy!

See ſweet enchanting Robinſon
Appears in gay capariſon,
§ With *Peter Lely* languiſh:
Her gallant Col—l, ‖ like great Sandy,
Cries, like a little Jack-a-dandy,
" Give me new worlds to vanquiſh!"

Here, ſome o'er ſtreams of coffee pouring,
There Johnny Brute in vulgar ſnoring

* *Neuters, &c. &c.*]—No oblique reflection is intended on the reſpectable under-mentioned clubs.

† *Afforded various ſpeci-*]—A ſecond ſpecimen of poetical licence.

‡ *Thrice-renown'd law givers*]—*Clubs* are *trumps* now!

§ *With* Peter Lely *languiſh*]—The above-mentioned beautiful lady imitates the *look* and *manner* of the beauties of Hampton-Court, painted by Sir Peter Lely.

‖ *Like great Sandy*]—By figure of ellipſis for Alexander the Great.

Proclaims *his taſte* for ſinging;
Andante and affettuoſo
Appear to him but very ſo, ſo;
Whilſt vaſt applauſe is ringing!

* Miſs Buckram ſwears that *Packey-a-rotia*
Sings like a nightingale Virginia;
Adores his thrilling quavers;
*An*cores the opera for ever,
† Thinks *Mounſeer Pig purdigious* clever
Whilſt on his toe he wavers!

Old Mrs. Tabby likes the ballet
‡ (" Plague take me; bleſs me, what d'ye call it?)
Where Romans rudely raviſh:"
Admires the ladies reſolution
T' inſiſt upon due reſtitution,
Of favours grown ſo laviſh!

* Paul

* *Miſs Buckram*]—The young lady really pronounced the ſinger's name in that very manner!

† *Thinks Mounſeer Pig*]—Which proves that Miſs forgot her French; or never learned it—Though Quintilian confeſſes himſelf at a loſs which way to determine.

‡ (" *Plague take me, &c.*]—Not being verſed in *Italian*, the lady forgot the name of her *favourite* dance.—Perhaps ſhe objected to *Italian terminations?*

*Paul Prig in yonder upper gallery,
With ſilken phraſe hits off *Cit* rallery,
Criticizing ſattins:
Whilſt Mrs. Prig, ſtiff as a doll,
Admires the Prince and all the qual.
As ſhe takes off her pattens!

But ſoft, 'tis Allegranti ſings:
With loud encores the concave rings
Bravo, ſweet girl, for ever;
The cognoſcenti to a man,
Since ſong or harmony began,
Ne'er heard of one ſo clever.

Ah! gentle note, that warbling ſteals
So ſoftly; how my boſom feels;
'Tis ſeraph's ſong I hear:
Such plaintive tones aſſail my heart;
Embalm the ſoul, and love impart
And check the riſing tear!

Thus vernal zephyrs o'er the roſe
Breathe gently, and its ſweets diſcloſe

To

* *Paul Prig*]—The muſe only repeats the real converſation of the parties.

To each admiring eye:
Its perfume fills the ambient air,
With poignant ſweets and incenſe rare,
Soft as Cecilia's ſigh!

But now in ſportive muſic's dome,
* Of foreigners *the harveſt-home*,
Fierce Diſcord waves her banners:
Nor gods, nor men can ſtop the fury,
Nor eke a legal choſen jury,
T' inſpect our nation's manners!

And now, the ſtorm tremendous lowr'd,
The riot muſic overpower'd,
The wond'ring audience ſtar'd:
From whence proceeds this horrid noiſe?
Death to my hopes and riſing joys
Some uproar is prepar'd!

" Reſtore my box, rich B—d—d cries!——
My little box I greatly prize:
† Nor ſhall a thouſand pounds
Deprive me of that ſnug retreat:
Nor gods, nor men ſhall take my ſeat,
Then popp'd out D—m—e! Zounds!"

The

* *Of foreigners the harveſt home*]—Very true.
† *Nor ſhall a thouſand pounds*]—To ſhew he did not value money.

The noiſe increas'd, the gazing crowd
For ſilence! ſilence! cried aloud:
  But now the mighty battle
With unrelenting rage increas'd;
The gods their wonted favour ceas'd,
  And added to the rattle!

*Now Jove hung out the *golden* ſcales;
The ladies leant upon the rails
  Of their embow'ring boxes;
All Europe ſaw with dread ſurpriſe.——
The rage that flaſh'd from B—d—d's eyes
  †Quite petrified the mauxes!

‡ *Pandora's* box ne'er caus'd ſuch trouble!
A dream, a mere *Ovidian* bubble
  To this ſad night's affray:
There *Mrs. Hope* ſtuck faſt I vow,
But lovely Jerſey was I trow
  Deny'd a longer ſtay!

*Here

* *Now Jove hung out the* golden *ſcales*]—To weigh the money taken at the door: as ſeveral great perſonages *make light* of giving money *ſhort* of weight.

† *The mauxes*]—A poetical phraſe for mere dowdies!

‡ *Pandora's box*]—The courteous reader will acknowledge the propriety of the alluſion.

* Here Vulcan ope the iron lock,
Around him all the ladies flock
And ſee him ſtorm the fort:
Himſelf and *carâ-ſpoſâ* ſeated,
† The lawyer fee'd, the blackſmith treated,
Poor Jerſey *à-là-morte!*

" Ah! let me in," the fair one cries,
Then with her iv'ry fingers tries
T' unbar the maſſy gate:
What?—No admittance!—Send for T—y—r;
Bring me a conſtable or jailor
To end this fierce debate!

‡ The crotchet monarch quickly hurries
To ſoothe the fair and calm her flurries:——
" Ye gods! what do I ſee?
Shall beauteous J—r—y want admittance
Into her box?——She gave her pittance
And paid the op'ra fee!

" Open

* *Here Vulcan, &c.*]—A rhetorical figure for blackſmith.

† *The lawyer fee'd*]—Certainly; or he never would have recovered his box.

‡ *The crotchet monarch*]—Alias *King of notes.*

" Open the door!"—" Who calls?"—" 'Tis I!
King of the realms of harmony!"—
" Begone!——you preach in vain:"
* " ——Shall a rude man, with ſable beard,
Oppoſe the lady of a laird
Bleſt with a vaſt domain?

Reſign the box, or dread my thunder:
Give up your baſe ignoble plunder;
Obey my pow'r ſupreme!——
Go; lord it o'er the ſemi-quavers
For Tueſday balls and lady's favors,
Fly like an idle dream!"

" The box is mine:——I paid my money:"
" Sit ſtill my pretty beauteous honey
No pow'r ſhall tear thee hence;"
" 'Tis mine:——my houſe and my caſtellum!
The other boxes——let him ſell 'em,
Or loggerheads commence!

Monarch of harmony begone;
Go;—ſonnets and ſonatas con,

* *Shall a rude man*]—The monarch ſeemed to favour ariſtocracy!

Reſume your dancing rapes,
I'll ne'er give up my choſen box:
Bring padlocks, and beſt patent locks,
And bolts of ſtrongeſt ſhapes!"

The monarch with o'erflowing rage
Flew from the boxes to the ſtage,
And ſummon'd all his joiners,
Gods, devils, furies of all nations,
Scamper'd from their reſpective ſtations;
Miners and counterminers!

His *band* he marſhall'd in due order,
Paper enough a room to border,
* Light infantry attended:
Le Picq commanded ev'ry Roman,
Zucchelli headed Sabine yeomen,
† E'en Slingſby was commended!

‡ Sweet Madame Roſſi and the Theo-
-dore, cry'd Eo, Meo, and Oreo,

Stick

* *Light infantry*]—*i. e.* Figure dancers!

† *E'en Slingſby was commended*]—A miracle—conſidering he is an *Engliſhman!*

‡ *Sweet Madam Roſſi and the Theo-*]—*Licentia vatum* again!

Stick cloſe my nymphs and follow:
He flies, he flies, *ſays great Daigville,
My wreſtling fury he ſhall feel,
We'll beat him, damme, hollow!

†The Latian chiefs with muſic ſcrowls,
Belts, blades, and ſcabbards; poiſon'd bowls
‡In recitative rumbled;
Morigi, Madame Carnovalè,
§Had lately practis'd fighting daily,
And Portamento grumbled!

Vaſt crouds of lions, tigers, bears,
‖In man's attire, came down the ſtairs
To grace the doughty battle;
Scene-ſhifters, lightning, pots, and kettles,
Tin ſwords, gilt foil, and ** wooden vittles,
And all the op'ra cattle!

* *Says great Daigville*]—A compliment to the *gentleman's* Herculean labours.

† *The Latian chiefs*]—*i. e.* The ſingers.

‡ *In recitative rumbled*]—The *Italian* mode of converſing!

§ *Had lately practiſed, &c.*]—By way of commemorating their *pull-cap* ſkirmiſh.

‖ *In man's attire, &c.*]—Alluding to opera holophuſicons, or dens of *wild beaſts!*

** *Wooden vittles*]—There is a complete entertainment and deſert in the *property man's* room, elegantly carved in *wood!*

Giardini *led* the choſen band,
With fiddle in his mighty hand;
  * Then tapp'd the ſconce for ſilence:
The fiddlers ſhoulder'd all their firelocks
As regular as any church clocks;
  But wiſh'd themſelves a mile hence!

The monarch thus addreſs'd the crowd,
Cry'd hem!——and rais'd his voice aloud,
  " Ye chiefs and pow'rs attend:
If all my laws are thus o'erthrown?
Subſcribers are ſo factious grown,
  My empire's at an end!

Send for my treaſurer, good J—w—ll:
I'll even fight another duel
  † Rather than yield my crown;
Should B—d—d thus uſurp the reins
Seize my gold ſceptre, forge *new* chains,
  'Twould blaſt my high renown!

* No

* *Then tapp'd the ſconce*]—The ſignal for the onſet.

† *Rather than yield my crown*]—Alluding to an obſolete cuſtom of deciding diſputes by ſingle combat!

* No——rather let fierce Diſcord rage:
I am the emp'ror of the ſtage;
Ye vaſſals hear my will.
Aſſemble all my troops and prancers,
Chaconnes, pas deux, and the firſt dancers;
Revenge ſhall have her fill!

Ah! Weltje, come and give us tea;
Orgeat, ice creams, and ratifia,
No more from Covent-Garden:——
Your cake is good—your capillaire
† Would ſuit the taſte of my Lord-May'r
Or any city warden!

Go—ſearch the coffee-room below:
Intreat thrice-honeſt An——o
To give me his advice.
Ah! let Lupino with his ſheers
Deſcend, like muſic of the ſpheres,
And dreſs me in a trice!

* *No;—rather let fierce Diſcord rage*]—A *modern* cuſtom—Rather than not gain my *ends* I will perplex and confound!

† *Would ſuit the taſte of my Lord-Mayor*]—A juſt obſervation on the extreme good judgement of *citizens* in point of *taſte!*

E'en worthy Crawford now refuſes
Succour; and Italian muſes
  Halt, fainting as they go;
Oh! Phœbus, god oracular,
Afford me pity from afar,
  Avert the fatal blow!

Now ſound to arms; to arms! to arms!
Ye trumpets echo war's alarms,
  My ſtandard I exalt!
Ye choriſters begin the lays,
Aſſert the undiminiſh'd praiſe
  * Of *B.* and *C.* in *alt!*"

The mighty army ſcal'd the height,
† The *neuters* in amazement wait
  While ſtorms impending lower:
The carpenters with clubs attack,
The engineers with horrid clack
  Play off ‡ a fiery ſhower!

* *Of B. and C. in alt!*]—A ſublime effort of ſinging!

† *The neuters*]—Suppoſed to be the *Italian* ſingers—though Aldobrandinoſus doubts it.

‡ *A fiery ſhower!*]—Vide Medea and Jaſon!

* *Do, re, mi, fa, la ſol*; oh la!
Open the box, my friend; ha! ha!
Amphion is at hand:
† And Orpheus in the very ſhape
Of Pacchierotti—no eſcape
From my celeſtial band!

‡ Sound *A*—Begin!—'tis very well:
Clear as an organ or a bell,
Orpheus begins to ſing.
§ His voice ſuch vaſt effects diſplays,
It can an houſe pull down or raiſe;
And mountains lightly wing.

" Well, ſays the foe in cloſe defile,
Can you my prudence e'er beguile,

* Or

* *Do, re, mi, fa, &c.*]—A *muſical* invocation!

† *And Orpheus, &c.*]—A juſt compariſon; though ſome are of opinion that Orpheus could do *more* than Pacchierotti!

‡ *Sound A*]—The muſician's *parole.*

§ *His voice, &c. &c.*]—Very true—Fine voices are the ſupport of the opera; they pulled the houſe down laſt year, and rebuilt it *this!*

* Or cheat me with a ſong?
My truſty box I ne'er will quit.
No—though the wide extenſive pit
Should vote me in the wrong!"

The ſtorm began without effect:
† His wife he ſwears he will protect
'Gainſt each deſigning foe.
" Oh, T—y—r, if you dare approach,
Or o'er my premiſes incroach,
I'll ſtrike a deadly blow!"

The monarch ſhook his head in ſorrow;
" ‡—Stay then you ſhall, e'en 'till to-morrow,
I'll nail thee in thy den:
I'll fortify thy weakeſt lines,
Or blow thee up with hidden mines,
§ *Addio*; *mio ben!*"

And

* *Or cheat me with a ſong?*]—*Vox & preterea nihil* would not do with *our* hero; though, to confeſs the truth, we are often *warbled* out of our money!

† *His wife he ſwears he will protect*]—A very unfaſhionable reſolution!

‡ —" *Stay then you ſhall e'en till to-morrow*]—Poor gentleman! he was *Burgoyne'd!*

§ *Addio mio ben*]—An Italian compliment!—Quite in character for the manager of an *opera* houſe!

And now the hammers echo'd far;
Bellona in her warlike car,
  * And Madame Simonet,
Medea-like, increas'd the ſtorm,
And ſhew'd her lovely graceful form
  In amazon array!

But now the warlike chief entrench'd
With vaſty force the portal wrench'd,
  And forc'd the fatal door;
The foe, confounded, fled away,
† And B—d—d won the thrice-proud day
  Victorious evermore!

Poor hapleſs Tay—r ſue'd for peace,
Begging that war's alarms might ceaſe;
  And ſent his plenipo's;
Preliminaries were adjuſted;
The fallen troops their habits duſted,
  Each had a bloody noſe!

* *And Madame Simonet*]—Alluding to that lady's inimitable performance of Medea.

† *And B—d—d won the thrice-proud day*]—A *proud* day equally ſignifies *a defeat* or *a victory*; beſides, it is the faſhionable phraſe of the day!

* The boundaries were duly fix'd;
Condolance with condolance mix'd,
The *frontiers* were reſtor'd:
And B—d—d was in *ſtatu quo*,
By gods above, and men below,
Decreed a doughty lord!

The peace was ſign'd in ſpite of F—x,
And Mrs. B—d—d had her box
† With padlocks fortify'd:
‡ The houſe addreſs'd a vote of thanks,
As ſeconded by Mr. B—kes;
Who ev'ry good deſcry'd!

§ But ſtill ſome vile malicious ſpirit
A deadly foe to true-born merit

* *The boundaries were duly fix'd*]—Poſſibly: yet we have but the plenipo's *bare* aſſertion for it.

† *With padlocks fortify'd*]—Juſt the ſame miſtake as our blundering negociators, ſuffering the enemy to cut a ditch round Chandenagore!

‡ *The houſe addreſs'd, &c.*]—Addreſſes are as plenty as muſhrooms; riſe equally faſt, and often ſpring from the ſame corrupted ſource!

§ *But ſtill, &c.*]—Every objection to *undue* influence is ever charitably accounted *malicious!*

Detracted from the peace;
* Declar'd he thought the *fur* trade loſt,
And that the peace too much had coſt,
Tho' B—d—d had the leaſe!

For that to fortify the box
With ſuch innumerable locks,
Ought to alarm the houſe:
† Perhaps, ere long, ſome tyrant king
Might arbitrary mandates bring?
And each ſubſcriber chouſe!

‡ But peace on any terms is beſt:
Then let our thanks be ſoon addreſs'd
To B—d—d the renown'd;
Victorious wreathes adorn his head,
Let cloth of gold be overſpread
B—d—d is duly crown'd!

Come, Peace! with olive branch, oh! come;
And ſilence the alarming drum:

Let

* *Declar'd he thought the* fur *trade loſt*]—What a ſhame to neglect the *fur* trade every where!

† *Perhaps, ere long, ſome tyrant king*]—Very poſſibly—a reaſonable quære; and very modeſtly urged!

‡ *But peace on any terms is beſt*]—Yes; according to the doctrine of a *certain* party.

Let Cupid wing his flight.
Hither! ye Graces, bend your way,
Aurora, harbinger of day,
Diſpel this murky night!

Hither attend, ye ſportive band,
Hither attend at Love's command,
Fair B—d—d rules the ſway;
Almighty Love bows lowly down,
Reſigns his ſceptre and his crown,
Let mortals all obey!

Her lovely eyes and form divine
With ev'ry native grace combine
To rule the realms below;
That tender form ſubdues all hearts,
Shooting unerring winged darts
At ev'ry paſſing beau!

Then *Iö Pæans* ſound afar,
* For peace ſucceeds to waſting war,
Fierce Diſcord is no more:
Now Venus, with benignant ray,
Aſſumes the ſofter, milder day,
Let beaux and belles adore!

* *For peace ſucceeds, &c.*]—The author hopes his *piece* will be more ſatisfactory than a certain noble lord's in the blue ribband!—It can ſcarce be *worſe!*

FINIS.